the Alliance Weekly

FEBRUARY 13, 1957

PACIFIC SCHOOL

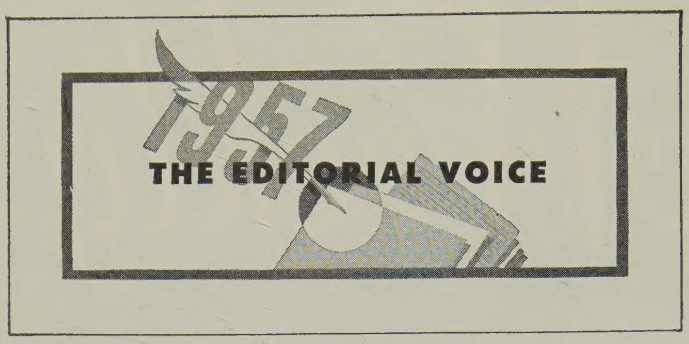
NKMEYER

A YOUNG JAVANESE MOTHER

In this issue

Superficial Believism—the Deadliest Heresy

By REV. PAUL A. KENYON



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON GUIDANCE

The editorial "How the Lord Leads," which appeared in our issue of January 2, apparently found many sympathetic readers. Obviously the problem of guidance is one that troubles many Christians.

The response to the piece has been very gratifying. Only one person wrote to disagree. Others expressed their thanks for help received and some asked questions or presented problems and asked for further counsel.

Rather than print the letters I thought it better to print the answers so other interested persons might share the counsel, such as it may be. While most of the questions are taken from one letter, they are representative of the rest.

QUESTION: *Can one pray to have a personal desire fulfilled and still be fully surrendered to God's will?*

A personal desire, yes, but not a selfish one. There is a difference. A prayer may be personal and still have no element of selfishness in it. The motive is everything. To be free from selfishness a prayer must be (a) according to the will of God as that will is revealed in the Scriptures; (b) for the honor of God rather than for the mere fulfillment of carnal ambition; (c) made in unaffected love for God and men. Of course this rules out covetousness, competition and all evil desire.

A few Biblical examples of personal requests which were honored by the Lord are found in the prayers of Abraham, David, Hannah, the woman of Shunem, Jabez, Hezekiah, Ezekiel, the leper in Matthew 8, Bartimaeus and Paul.

QUESTION: *You warn against "using God" and "trying to employ Him to achieve our own ends." Would not asking God for something personal be an attempt to "use" Him?*

A truly spiritual man will be so united to Christ that he will have no desires apart from Him. If we Christians lived in the Spirit as perfectly as we should and could, our common interests would touch not only ourselves but the honor of God and the welfare of mankind as well. In answering a "personal" prayer God would then be helping the individual, blessing mankind and bringing glory to His own name all in one act. We need not hesitate to ask God to help us to achieve ends that lie in God. Our difficulty comes from asking Him to help us to reach ends that lie outside of Him.

QUESTION: *I am in government service and deeply dislike my work. I feel that I am not accomplishing anything worthwhile. Is it right for me to pray to be led into a different kind of work?*

It is always right to take our problems to God in prayer. He has promised to bring the blind by a way that they knew not (Isa. 42:16), and He assures us that if we keep Him in our thoughts our path will be directed (Prov. 3:5, 6). We should not, however, allow ourselves to get wrought up about anything. It is the consensus among superior souls (as revealed in the books of devotion) that the Spirit leads without agitation, while the enemy, when he tries to imitate the Spirit, usually whips us up to a state of confusion and mental distress. The best rule is to pray, trust God fully and then follow His providences. Do not insist upon an earthquake or a whirlwind as the only evidences of divine guidance. God may lead you by a still small voice or by quietly arranging a set of circumstances as ordinary as to seem commonplace. Faith accepts quiet guidance; only unbelief demands a miracle.

QUESTION: *I am a university student and my problem is this: If I study enough to pass my tests I have a feeling of guilt for having neglected my prayer life. If I pray enough to satisfy my heart I neglect my studies. What shall I do?*

I think you are creating a problem where none exists. You have fallen into the common error of living a divided life, counting prayer as sacred and study as secular. God's will never contradicts itself; neither does He lay upon us duties that conflict with one another.

Here is my advice: Consecrate your studies to God as a living sacrifice. Ask Him to accept your intellectual labors as an offering of love. To the spiritual man everything is sacred; nothing is secular. William Law says, "Miranda does not divide her duty between God, her neighbor and herself; but she considers all as due to God, and so does everything . . . for His sake."

Begin to think of your college work as intellectual worship acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. This will make the dullest subject enjoyable and, incidentally, it will sharpen your brain so you can grasp difficult ideas a lot more easily.

The notion that prayer is to be made in retirement only is erroneous. That prayer which consists of an address to the Deity (which the Pharisees made on the street corner and which our Lord said should be made in the closet) is only one kind of prayer. A well-lived life is a prayer if it is lived in the faith of Christ. The hands may pray by doing honest work, the feet by carrying us to that work; sleep can be prayer when it refreshes us to serve our fellow men and eating may be prayer if it is done with thanksgiving.

There is no reason to doubt that your college studies are an acceptable form of spiritual service. Of course you should spend as much time as possible in prayerful retirement; only don't get under bondage to it. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

(More next week)

this the deadliest heresy of them all?

Superficial Believism

By REV. PAUL KENYON

OMETIME the true history of present church period will be itten. It may not be until the ır when the records are opened heaven that all the facts will be ealed.

That hour, of course, will divulge st clearly the state of things which vailed in our own apostate gener-ɔn. What comes to light could aze even the saints in heaven. st startling of all may be that ıe of the doctrines most vigorous-proclaimed in the ranks of the posedly orthodox will be num-ed among the most dangerous esies ever to stain the pages of urch history.

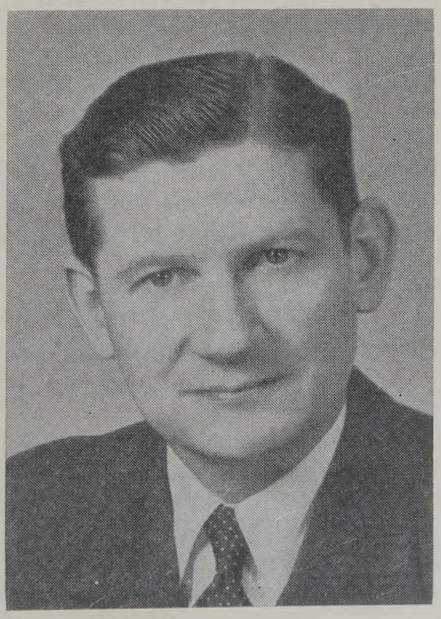
When error has been accepted as th by the masses it is not too like-that it will be readily or easily dicated. False doctrine creeps unawares. It has always been so. e subtlety of error is that it ap-rs so very close to the truth. ly the few who have lived with Word of God and under the ct guidance of the Holy Spirit e ever detected wherein the error . To come out boldly against se false but popular teachings, e they are established, is to bring self under condemnation. Often neans that one is branded as a atic. To all of this church his-y testifies most eloquently.

Let it now be made plain. I am referring to the obviously hereti-doctrines of the numerous modern ts. Neither am I alluding to the departures from truth as found ɔng the liberal theologians. I am aking of a teaching which has l wide and enthusiastic accept-e in our own evangelical ranks, aching which is being confidently claimed as the message of the hour. In particular I refer to that most popular of doctrines which I shall term "superficial believism."

From the plain teachings of God's Word, there is no doubt that eternal souls pass from death unto life through a living faith in Jesus Christ. But ever and always this faith must be preceded by genuine repentance. Paul the apostle had but one message for Jews and Gentiles alike wherever he proclaimed the gospel of grace. That message he summed up completely before King Agrippa. Said Paul: "O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:19, 20).

This is the message which that God-appointed man preached in establishing all of the New Testament churches. And he boldly claimed that he received this message "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." He did not get it from men (Gal. 1:11, 12). Repentance ever precedes faith in New Testament doctrine, and there is no faith born into hearts apart from a repentance which is genuine in the sight of God who knows all hearts. The Pauline teaching further demanded "works meet for repentance." This was an external evidence that the sorrow for sin and complete turning from sin were a factual inner reality. Here was the visible and public testimony to a transformed life.

Rev. Paul A. Kenyon



True Biblical teaching on repentance has been practically abandoned in this day of superficial believism. It remains as a conviction only with the small minority. Not only has the doctrine come into disrepute, but the type of preaching which the Spirit of God could use to produce repentance is seldom heard from the modern pulpit. Hence in our modern orthodox ranks coldhearted and dry-eyed sinners are sweetly exhorted to "accept Jesus as their Saviour," without so much as being told that they must thoroughly repent and completely forsake all known sin. They are but to "believe"; and what is meant by believing is enveloped in a thick mist of theological obscurities.

What, then, are they to believe?

Mr. Kenyon has spent many years in both evangelistic ministry and the pastorate. He is now serving the Brown Street Church of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Akron, Ohio. His article points up a trend which may easily lead multitudes away from a true experience of regeneration.

Not long ago a prominent radio preacher, heard from coast to coast, lifted a New Testament passage neatly from its context, misapplied it and then cried out: "If you believe what this verse says you are saved right now; I say, you are saved right now." The verse was: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). This particular belief to which the radio listeners were exhorted was actually nothing more or less than an intellectual assent to historical fact. Such is schoolroom knowledge and not a living faith in God's Son. Such is the concept of faith in our generation.

This effort to convince people they are saved, when they have not met and will not meet the conditions for salvation, is the order of the hour. Popular evangelists must get the crowds and fill the altars to create the illusion of success. If they fail in this, their reputation fades and the calls to minister cease to come their way. Popular radio preachers must have sensational mail to read, or they will receive no financial support to carry the unceasing burden of huge radio bills. The pulpit man who is the idol of the many knows he must beget crowds and converts or his sun will quickly set. The gullible public gives its dollars to the man who can make the most astounding claims of success in hawking the gospel. It has never been popular to preach the whole truth.

This matter of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is not so easy as it sounds. Take for instance the simple statement of the apostle John: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God" (1 John 5:1 A.S.V.). The word which is translated "believeth," as used here and in its various constructions throughout the New Testament, means "to believe a person to be true; to place trust in them, to rely on them; to commit oneself to them; cast oneself upon them; entrust oneself to them" (Souter's *Lexicon*).

It is a far, far cry from merely accepting with the intellect the historical fact—that Christ died for sinners and rose again for their justification—to this inborn reality of faith that produces the kind of believing here defined. Any other theory of faith can be dogmatically declared to be wholly superficial. Salvation comes to the sinning one when he under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit repents and forsakes sin. He then casts himself totally on Christ as his only hope. It is absolute committal. And such alone is true believing.

We repeat that such faith can never be inspired until repentance is complete. God is the one to be satisfied, and God knows our hearts. Invariably the act of believing is revealed in the New Testament as something we do which is consistent and continuous. The Greek tenses which are used to declare the believing process undeniably certify that this is so. We read literally in First John 5:5, "Who is he that keeps on overcoming the world, but he that keeps on believing that Jesus is the Son of God?" Such a life of constant faith naturally demands unfailing obedience to the will of God.

In such individuals the transforming work of the Holy Spirit is real and complete. They are truly begotten of God, and to this the Comforter witnesses. "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John 5:6). He is the One who alone has right to witness to the believing heart the fact of the miracle of the new birth. God has never delegated to any human being this divine prerogative. These Spirit-born Christians are overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil. Not sometimes, by mere effort; but consistently by the indwelling power of Christ. The Spirit's witness is the abiding assurance within; the overcoming life is the evidence without.

It is nothing short of pitiful to witness the sincere ones among the adherents of modern superficial believism try in their own weakness to live the overcoming life. Vainly, and sometimes defiantly, they attempt to cling to what they have been told. "Just believe" was the instruction of the experts, so they struggle to believe that which somehow they know is not quite right. Neither God nor their own lives are witness to any supernatural transformation, so they struggle on or turn back to the old ways in hopeless frustration.

The end of the trail will reveal untold thousands of people who were the hapless victims of this erroneous teaching. They were so near to truth by the standards of a present-day perverted doctrine, yet so very far away from the plain teaching of the Word of God. These became the unfortunate victims of this doctrine of death. ◆ ◆ ◆

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Christianity Cannot be Hid

BY JOHN WESLEY

A secret, unobserved religion can not be the religion of Jesus Christ. Whatever religion can be concealed is not Christianity. If a Christian could be hid, he could not be compared to a city set upon a hill; to the light of the world; to the sun shining from heaven and seen by all the world below.

Never, therefore, let it enter the heart of him whom God hath renewed in the spirit of His mind to hide that light, to keep his religion to himself; especially considering it is not only impossible to conceal true Christianity, but likewise absolutely contrary to the design of the great Author of it.

Prayer and the Family Altar

By JOSEPH T. LARSON

HE Christian that would grow iritually must become a person at knows how to pray. The dis-ples asked Jesus to teach them to ay (Luke 11:1). Christ taught em, but He did not mean we ould only repeat the prayer He id then.

By observing the prayers in the ld and New Testament we learn mething of the words to use in ayer. But the Holy Spirit will ach us by guiding our minds and oughts in proper expression.

Great men of history were men of ayer: Martin Luther, Charles esley, Charles G. Finney, Dwight Moody, George Washington, who ayed in Valley Forge for victory, braham Lincoln and a host of ners. God moves in answer to ayer. He can send revival, save uls and heal bodies in answer to evailing prayer.

Prayer is vital communion with d. Coupled with reading of the ble, it becomes a godly habit worth ltivating.

Every Christian needs to get alone th God. Confess every known ; ask God to deal with your carnal ture, every problem of your heart. can dispel all doubts and fear, d give you a song of gladness and assurance that He is with you ntinually. Christ said, "Men ought ways to pray, and not to faint" uke 18:1). "If thou faint in the y of adversity, thy strength is all" (Prov. 24:10).

Martin Luther said, "Pray in the dst of temptation." Are you rried? Then commit yourself and fears to God in prayer. Bishop ayle sat up one night worrying. d spoke to him and said, "You l better go to bed, Quayle; I'll up the rest of the night." God tches over His own day and night. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psa. 55:22).

Let us learn to pray according to the will of God. Let us abide in Christ, appropriating all that Christ has for us. Drink deeply from the fountain of all life; flee away from broken cisterns that can hold no water.

A Family Altar

Every family should have a family altar. This means that the father or mother will call the children together to read the Bible and pray with all members of the family. What if you are alone or unmarried? Then read the Bible daily and pray alone. Begin the day with God. Do not allow this prayer to become merely formal, but earnestly seek God's guidance. There are many professed Christian homes without a family altar, and when they need God they are not in the best fellowship with Him. The family altar can become a bulwark against Satan, sin and temptation. It can become a place of power in daily life and walk. There God will give peace, victory and assurance for the day. Seldom is there a broken home when the family altar is kept up. Millions of Christians can testify to this very fact.

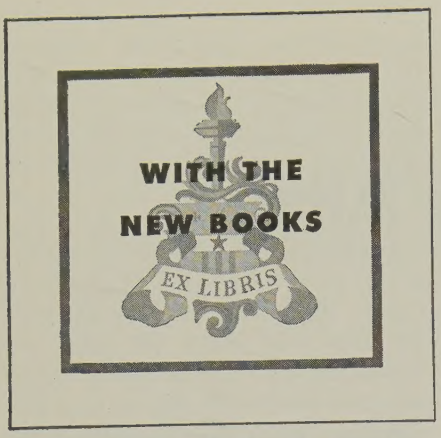
A godly family in North Carolina maintained a family altar for over fifty years. Then both the mother and father died. When the three sons returned from the funeral of the father one asked, "Who is going to pray with us now?" James asked the other two brothers to read the Bible and pray. All felt they could not. They had not been converted during the years. Finally John said, "Let us all kneel and give our hearts to God. That would be what Mother and Father would want us to do." So they knelt before God and brokenly confessed their sins to God, asking Him to save them. God answered their prayers. Although these men were past sixty years of age, God in answer to a praying father and mother at a family altar saved them. That was the reward of faithfulness in prayer. Surely no family should wait for many years before establishing a family altar. If you are on the high seas, in prison, in a school or at home, establish your period of prayer and Bible study. Do it faithfully before God. He will answer your prayers.

Pray to God in the name of Christ on the basis of His shed blood, on the basis of His sure promises to answer and on the basis of God's faithfulness to answer prayer.

As a young man, Dr. Reuben A. Torrey became discouraged with life because of his sins. He was about to commit suicide. Then he seemed to hear his mother say, "Reuben, in the darkest hour of your life don't forget to pray and God will hear you."

He knelt and confessed his sinfulness, asking God to save him, and God promptly forgave him all his sins. He became a great pastor, Bible teacher and evangelist, with a world-wide ministry for about fifty years. Back of this was God and a praying mother. Begin this day to have a set time for prayer and Bible study. ◆ ◆ ◆

This series of articles, which began in our issue of January 2, is concluded with this issue. They will appear in booklet form later in the year and may be ordered direct from Mr. Larson, 4203 Alcott Street, Denver 11, Colo.



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Distended, Not Expanded

A REVIEW BY A. W. TOZER

The Gospels, An Expanded Translation, by Kenneth S. Wuest. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 320 pages, $3.50.

Since discovering how sensitive the average Christian is about unfavorable reviews I have just kept quiet and let the presses roll. But a book has come out recently which I cannot allow to pass unnoticed. At the risk of hurting some of my timid friends I must discharge my obligation to my small public. Duty demands it, as the song says, and I must do my duty.

The book is called "An Expanded Translation" of the Four Gospels and the translator is Dr. Kenneth S. Wuest. If such a thing were possible I should like very much to divorce the book from its author, at least for purposes of critical examination, because while I do not like the book I feel for the author only genuine respect and sincere Christian affection.

Before speaking of the book in detail I suppose I should state that I have forgotten most of my Greek but can make out a little English if I move my lips and take it slow. I am not one of those who are shocked when they find unfamiliar words and phrases on the pages of the Bible. I have quite a sizeable collection of translations of the Scriptures and consult them frequently. My objection to the "Expanded Translation" is not that it differs from King James' English, but that it differs from English.

This is the only book known to me that tries to forestall unfavorable reviews by disqualifying the reviewer before he begins (page 31). The translator claims in the preface to have "a decent regard for good English diction," but the reader may look in vain for such diction in the text itself. The book is written, not, as it claims, in the "vivid" language of the "man on the street," but in the wooden language of the classroom and the study. It is completely out of touch with living English.

Now, a translator stands to be judged not only by the language from which he translates but by that *into* which he translates as well. He must know *both* languages. It is not enough that the man who would make an English translation of the New Testament should know the Greek; he must also be a master of English, or let him refrain from the attempt. The reader dare not be brushed off with a wave of the hand. He has every right to demand that the translator be a craftsman of sufficient skill to enable him to produce a work that is true to the genius of the English tongue. Whether it be the English of Joseph Addison or that of Westbrook Pegler, one requirement is that it be English.

I cannot believe that poor English is the equivalent of good Greek; and with every kind feeling for the translator I must say that this "Expanded Translation" is poor English.

It is, for instance, cluttered with clichés: "In that case," "reason upon the basis of," "a Syrophenician woman as to her race," "in the case of," "with respect to," "in view of the fact" and "the aforementioned men" are a few examples.

This is probably the most vulnerable book published in this generation. Every page, every paragraph, almost every sentence has its awkward construction, its verbal amateurism, to make the lover of good English wince. And by "good English" I do not mean the language of the classics nor even scholarly English necessarily. I mean no more than English that is true to its own idiom.

In his effort to get all the meaning out of the original the translator puts full length dictionary definitions right into the English text. An example: In Mark 1:4 the verb "preaching" becomes "making a public proclamation with that formality, gravity, and authority which must be heeded and obeyed." And this is "vivid" English! Again, the familiar "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat" is expanded to read, "The men learned in the Scriptures and the Pharisees occupy the professorial chairs of authoritative teachers whose responsibility it is to interpret Moses." Ignoring the ambiguity in the first part of the sentence, does the reader find this to be an improvement over the direct language of the King James? I think not. The te is not expanded, it is merely distende

This new version of the Gospels do not hesitate to put into the mouth our Saviour all kinds of academic jarg unknown to the plain man to who Christ first spoke and to whom He still speaking. It often makes the Lo of Glory speak the gobbledygook of t Washington bureaucrat. Our Lord made to sound like a seminary profe sor lecturing a class of freshmen New Testament Introduction. The bo is so verbose that most of the time t meaning simply does not come throug Trying to read it gives me the sam feeling a man might get if he tried shave with a banana.

Confidence in the accuracy of th book is likely to be badly shaken aft the reader has come across such i accuracies as these: "a man whos one hand was withered," "he was in miserable condition physically," "excep only," "in order that" for *that,* "rende ing the ground inoperative." And f that famous "narrow is the way" w find "compressed is the road." Surel no one can think of a road being "con pressed" and be thinking in Englis And the funny little expression "n one bit" which occurs here and the throughout the book is also disconcer ing. Imagine a "man on the street" sa ing that. Such language is for litt girls.

The book is actually not a transl lation at all, but an interpretatio What the Scofield Bible editors we content to put in the footnotes it pu into the text. The whole work is solemn example of the tyranny of word It is a classic study in tautology, tex ualism at its dismal worst, an exerci in the kind of uninspired verbalis that has slowly smothered fundamenta ism to death.

It would be a major tragedy evangelicalism should be influenced b anything as unbeautiful as is this a tempted portrait of the One who altogether lovely.

Books in Brief

Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Our by Roland Allen. Moody Press, Chicag Ill. 230 pages, $2.50.

The increased emphasis on the i digenous church gives importance this reprint of a missionary classic.

Soul-winning Sermons, Vol. 1, by R. Torrey. Fleming H. Revell, Westwoo N. J. 248 pages, $2.50.

A collection of Torrey's sermo through which God was pleased save thousands. They will prove i spirational to both preacher and la man.

DAVID R. ENLOW, Editor

HOME

ports scroll sheds new light on Noah: Noah, builder the Ark, was such an extraordinary infant that his her believed he had been supernaturally conceived d spoke to his wife "with vigor" about it, charging to swear to the truth about the boy's origin. This w light on the family life of the Biblical patriarch mech, father of Noah, and his wife, Bat-Enoch (whose me is not recorded in Biblical writings), is contained what is known as the seventh Dead Sea Scroll, the t to be unrolled, Dr. Yigael Yadin, one of Israel's lead- archeologists, disclosed in New York.

●

st airline offers reduced clergy fares: Bonanza Air- es, of Las Vegas, Nev., is the first commercial airline file a passenger tariff with the Civil Aeronautics Board Washington, D. C., offering reduced rates to clergy- n. The tariff provides that clergymen will be able buy tickets on a "space available" basis for 50 per t of the one-way fare. The airline is a small "feeder" rier. It serves a number of cities in New Mexico, zona, Nevada and California, providing them with necting service to major transcontinental air terminals.

●

nisters hold "school of religion" at reformatory: Min- rs of seven Protestant denominations are conducting Monday night "school of religion" at the state re- matory in St. Cloud, Minn. The school, instituted by v. Neal A. Kuyper, Protestant chaplain at the in- tution, has just completed its fall quarter with certif- tes presented to eighty-five inmates who participated voluntary classes.

●

rgy have April 15 social security deadline: Clergy- n and members of religious orders were reminded by government that they face a deadline of April 15, 7, if they wish social security coverage. Congress cted legislation in 1955 extending the social security gram to members of the clergy and religious orders the first time.

●

t Wayne begins new radio, TV series: On January 13 Fort Wayne Bible College, Fort Wayne, Ind., began ew radio series called "Crossroads" which is aired on days at 11:30 P. M. (CST) on WOWO (1190 kc.). January 20 a new TV series "Doorway" began, to be duced each Sunday at 2:15 P. M. on WKJO-TV.

ABROAD

Ask Christian youth groups shun Moscow Festival: Christian youth groups have been urged by the youth department of the British Council of Churches to stay away from the sixth World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow this year. It said the festival would foster Communist propaganda. "It would be unwise and would serve no constructive purpose for any Christian youth organization to send representatives to the 1957 festival," the department said in an official statement.

●

Plan evangelical conference in Caribbean: An evangelical conference of the Caribbean will be held at the Polytechnic Institute in San German, Puerto Rico, the last week of February. Delegates from Cuba, Santo Domingo, Haiti and Jamaica will study evangelistic strategy in the Caribbean area. Sponsors of the conference are the International Missionary Council and the Evangelical Council of Puerto Rico.

●

Austrian Protestants seek equality: In Austria the Protestant church is negotiating with the government to secure "complete freedom and equal rights" for Protestants in that country. Church leaders have been seeking a legal settlement for the past twenty-six years. They are asking that Protestant churches be put on the same basis as welfare organizations and thus get advantage of the same tax concessions. The Protestants are also asking for assurances that they will have equal rights in every sphere of public life.

●

Latin America Mission expands educational program: In San José, Costa Rica, the Latin America Mission has just dedicated a three-story girls' dormitory and dining hall building, marking completion of the first major unit in a $150,000 construction program for the Latin American Bible Seminary. The seminary celebrated thirty-three years of continuous ministerial training with a dedicatory graduation banquet in the spacious new dining room.

PEOPLE

Student group appoints Chao: Rev. Calvin Chao, of Hong Kong and Singapore, has been appointed to head the Chinese department of International Students, Inc. In that capacity he will spearhead Christian activity among the four thousand Chinese students in the United States and at the same time direct the overseas work of the organization among Chinese students in the Far East.

●

Former Japanese pilot to tour United States: Former Captain Mitsuo Fuchida, who as a pilot in the Japanese Navy led the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, left Tokyo for a tour of the United States as a Christian missionary. Converted after the war, the fifty-four-year-old evangelist is a member of the Sky Pilots of America, a group whose aim is to interest boys in Christian work through their love of airplanes and to train young men to become flying missionaries.

WELDON B. BLACKFORD, Editor

A "Hiroshima Maiden" Finds God

THE PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF HIDEKO HIRATA, HIROSHIMA, JAPAN

It was about eight-fifteen on the morning of August 6, 1945, in the city of Hiroshima, Japan. I had arrived at my place of occupation and was undertaking my work for the day. Suddenly there was a blinding light, followed by a tremendous concussion. I was thrown to the floor and lay there unconscious. When I regained consciousness and got to my feet everything around me seemed to be in a haze. People were running in every direction. I discovered that those around me were covered with terrible burns. I finally realized that I also had severe burns, so I immediately went home.

When I arrived home the family decided we should leave the city. I saw sights in the streets as we were leaving that I shall never forget. School children with clothes burned off their bodies were running to their homes screaming, "Mother, Mother." Other children were standing in the schoolyard too frightened to know what to do. One little girl, now dead, was seated in a foxhole still holding a canteen of water to her lips in the act of drinking. I saw other girls whose bodies were so badly burned they looked like inflated balloons. Hundreds of people died that night. My burns were so severe that it was almost a half year before I was able to move about.

My greatest frustration and bitterness came when I was finally able to go outside the house. I was greatly embarrassed by the stares of people at my scarred face. I longed to get a job and again find happiness at some work, but I was afraid to face the people.

A man by the name of Louis Zamparini came to Hiroshima with a Youth for Christ team during these days of my personal struggle. I attended their meetings. One night while listening to the message it seemed as though a bright light began to shine in my soul. I went forward at the close of the meeting to receive Christ as my personal Saviour. I was saved and became grateful that I was still alive in spite of my horrible scars. The verse of Scripture which meant so much to me were the words in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

However, the humiliating scars I bore in my face continued to haunt me. I became discouraged, and although I attended the services at the church I was out of touch with God. But the Lord continually drew me to Himself during those trying times.

Good news finally came. I was given a wonderful opportunity to go to America to receive medical help in the removal of my awful scars. So I came to America as one of a group of girls called the "Hiroshima Maidens." The separation from family and home, along with my inability to understand the ne language, left me with many prob lems and the feeling of loneliness But I soon came in contact wit others who believed in God as did, and I learned that regardles of the country or language, we we all brothers and sisters in the Lor

Although I suffered many u pleasant things through the atomi bomb experience, I thank God th through it all I came to know Hi

AYF Contest Corner

A Worthwhile Objective

Last year the objective of the Pr gram Contest was fourfold:

1. To collect our own source program material.
2. To distinguish our Society i the field of youth programing.
3. To encourage better progra ing in the local AYF.
4. To stimulate a national fello ship through the contest.

This year's objective is essentia the same, but there is one sligh change which will be noted in t following outline. This year's Pr gram Contest is to

1. *Introduce* AYFers to the su ject of proper programing.
2. *Teach* them how to organi for the work of programing.
3. *Suggest* ways of preparing m terial for good programing.
4. *Guide* them in presenting a promoting good programs.

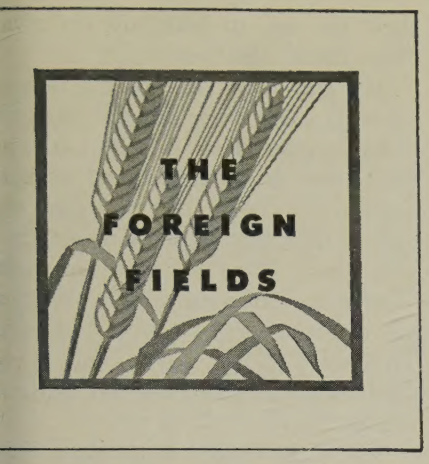
The second annual Program Co test is an interest feature for all o AYFs. Its aim is to stimulate a mo serious planning of their week meetings and to interest the enti AYF in sharing this phase of t responsibility.

May every AYF unite in the spi of the 1957 Program Contest. G grant that its objective shall realized throughout all our AYFs.

1957 AYF Guide

February 18-22

Monday .....Genesis 24:1-31
Tuesday .....Psalm 25
Wednesday .....Mark 1:21-34
Thursday .....Psalm 73
Friday .....Acts 13:26-52



Year of Grace

MRS. ETHEL BELL, *Africa*

his past year started with not too uch promise in the natural. We ere two ladies alone in Béoumi, ory Coast, and both of us were so cupied with the work of the girls' hool that we knew, as far as we ere concerned, the district would e neglected. And then in THE LLIANCE WEEKLY appeared a re- uest for prayer for this station and is work. As a result the Lord must ave raised up many prayer helpers r, looking back, we think with atitude and praise upon all that od has done.

We might almost say the work as not suffered. Our national orkers have been strengthened to rve with zeal and fervor. Laymen ave been raised up to take a real terest, to visit regularly the out- ing points and to help shepherd elievers scattered far and near. ime after time our hearts were addened and encouraged as they ould stop at the Mission to tell us at they were on their way to a rtain town and to ask us to pray r them as they went. Best of all, me people were saved

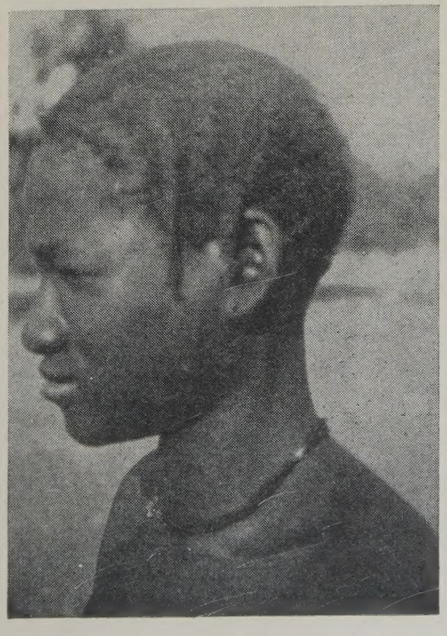
An apparent misfortune fell when y colleague was called to Bouake assist in the Bible school. In order keep our school open it meant y staying alone for two months. ut at the end of that time I could nly praise and magnify the Lord r the way He so graciously helped nd blessed. In the first place I as too busy to be lonely; and then, rrounded by Baouli believers as was (schoolgirls, their matrons, e native workers and their families, nd other Christians living nearby), never really felt alone. The girls took turns coming to my house to sleep, two or more each night. They always came a little early so that they could look at Bible pictures before bedtime. I didn't even regret not hearing English during that time. The Lord was surely with us and blessed us all.

And now Rev. and Mrs. Robert Galley are back from furlough and everyone is happy to have them here again. We are looking forward to a year of fruitful service, if Jesus tarries.

We had a fine Christmas. It is always a joy to fellowship with the believers at such a time and inspiring to see the groups from different towns as they stand to sing and recite Scripture. Our hearts were challenged afresh as the Kongobo group stood—about forty-five of them—the line extending across the front of the church. All but six were women. They have remained true, in spite of little teaching, for several years. Their town is distant and difficult of access. It is our desire to make a special effort on their behalf during school vacation.

The girls had a happy Christmas. They went caroling in the early morning. Kind friends at home sent them candy and pretty, bright-colored bags for their books, and these all delighted them. In two weeks they will return home for vacation. We pray that they may have a knowledge of God's Word that will help and bless their people.

An African schoolgirl L. HILLMAN



Jungle Churches

By MRS. RONALD GRIFFITHS, *Peru*

Tingo María, a small jungle town, is our station. In the surrounding area we see thatch-roofed homes alongside dirt roads. There are dogs, chickens, pigs and dirty-faced children in the yards. Women with huge, clothes-laden basins on their head go to the river to wash. Here there are all types of banana trees, coffee plants, papaya trees—and the jungle! As we see the multitudes here in Peru walking in spiritual darkness with no evidence of peace or happiness, we long to see them all brought to a transforming knowledge of the Lord.

Since we arrived here a few months ago we have visited the churches in villages around Tingo María. It is encouraging to find so many Christians gathered together in their little churches. One Sunday evening we planned to visit the church in Bella Rondos, situated in the jungle on the other side of the river.

The night was truly beautiful. The sky was filled with stars, but there is no place so dark as a jungle at night where no street lights brighten the way. But we started with joy in our hearts, anxious for and expecting real blessing from the Lord. Half an hour later we could hear the sound of singing in the distance, and as we finally reached the thatch-roofed, bamboo-walled church we saw the benches filled and many people standing.

There is always a royal welcome for a missionary. How grateful we are for the part we can play in giving spiritual help to these brothers and sisters in Christ. During the time of testimonies we heard how the Lord had blessed them and given them spiritual victory. However, along with the victories come trials and testings. We were impressed anew with the importance of lifting them up in prayer. Satan is at work trying to bring defeat and discord by means of what are actually trivial matters.

Join us in prayer for these, your brethren in Christ in the Tingo María area, that the Lord will uphold them, old and young alike, and strengthen them that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

G. D. STROHM

A young Christian Bagobo, Philippine Islands

A Pagan Woman's Soliloquy

After a first visit of a missionary couple to a pagan area in the Philippines

By VELMA McKINNIS

STRANGE looking people came to our house today. I did not ask them in for I was afraid our bamboo floor would break under their weight. Our roof is so low I'm sure they could never have stood erect without bumping their heads. I apologized for my inhospitality, but they didn't seem to mind.

They stood under the shade of the roof; it was little shelter from the mid-morning sun. And then they opened a music box and began to sing songs which we never heard before. We often sing, but this was different!

Our old folks taught us songs of the hunters and of the old village people of many years ago, of their loves and quarrels and of the many outwitting experiences in their dealings with each other. We sing these songs and tell the same things many, many times. We do not think new thoughts; our thoughts are old ones handed down to us. We chant them in the morning or sit late at night singing them to the beat of agongs.

The music we heard today was different. The visitors were singing about *Dwata* (God) and Jesus, and about a place—a home in heaven. They sang of Jesus and about His blood that washes all our sins away. This is truly a new song.

The lady leaned a board against a stand and covered it with a small blanket. Then she put some pictures on it. Strange, those pictures stayed there like magic. I wonder why they did not fall, but they did stick all the time she was talking. It was a new story. I had never heard it before. God loves me, she said. He died for me, to take my sin away. How could this be?

My sin? We are all the same—sinners! The lies we tell are sin? What pagan does not lie? To tell the truth is weak. It is not our custom. To be honest and pay your debts? Ah, this woman never knew our way. What is that she said? "These are not your ways; these are not my ways, for we are all sinners. These are God's ways, and if we really want to go to heaven we must follow Him."

"Go to heaven?" Who would not like to go to heaven if it's like the place she said? But if only the clean can go, how can I ever enter in? *Clean by His blood—washed so very white, like the whitest cloud; clean of every sin.*

Of course, I liked it. When she asked, I said, "Surely I want Him to take my sins away."

Then the strangers left. They drove away in a little jeep. Trucks had often come for corn, but never a jeep and strangers of another skin. They were tall and big.

I felt a new sensation in my breast. I felt clean. Can it be my sin is gone? Is that what this strange feeling really means? I must tell the others this strange happening.

But the *datu* (chief), what will he say? He did not advise me to do this. This is not of his desire. This must mean that I have really thought for myself today! Thought for myself—that is not our custom. Only the *datu* thinks for us; but I did it—I thought for myself today—and something strange and wonderful has filled my being.

Quotes from the Fathers

"'Obey' doesn't mean merely doing things. Obedience is the rhythm of our wills with Jesus' will. It opens the way for Him to pour out the fullness of His love—and this in turn stirs ours to a new depth and tenderness."—S. D. GORDON.

"The one concern of Satan is to keep the saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, and trembles when we pray."—ANDREW BONAR.

French West Africa

At Sangalabadou, about eight kilometers from Telekoro in French Guinea, another witch doctor has made a profession of salvation. The student who holds services there brought some of the man's fetishes to Telekoro. Since his supposed repentance, the witch doctor has been tested physically, thus it is felt that he has not yet surrendered all his fetishes. Pray for him.

Gabon

The Gabon field is looking forward with great joy to the ordination of eight national workers during the visit of Dr. H. L. Turner in February. Praise is given to God for these men who have passed through years of temptation from heathen relatives and yet have remained true. In March a refresher school for the recently ordained men will begin, under the direction of Rev. J. A. Corby. Pray that during the several months of study and fellowship, the Word of God may become living and real to these workers as they prepare to face the many decisions that will be theirs as the indigenous church goes forward in Gabon.

Viet Nam

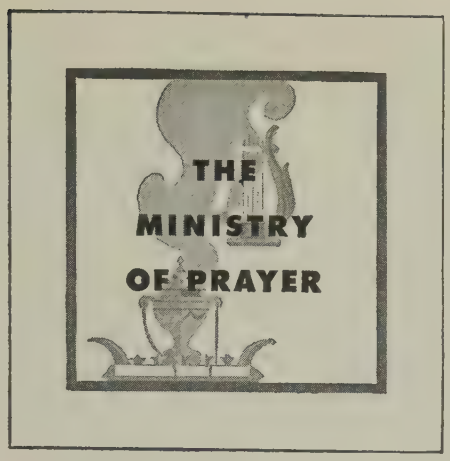
Pray that funds will be received for getting out gospel literature. This is a most urgent need. A large percentage of the Vietnamese are now literate and will read anything they can get. The Communists and false cults are taking advantage of this and are flooding the country with their pernicious literature. Many individuals have been converted through reading Gospels and tracts, but more literature must be produced and distributed. . . . A Youth for Christ team has been organized in the Saigon area. The members are Mr. and Mrs. Ngan (who handle the radio work), Mr. Van (translator), Messrs. Phu, Quang and Thai. The latter works in the Bible House. These people are engaged in Christian work during the week, then give their time on Sundays for evangelistic meetings. Their desire is to preach the gospel and also to build up the spiritual life of the youth. Pray for them and those to whom they minister.

Tribes of Viet Nam

Praise God for the work He has done in the village of Buon Ki, where one entire family now believes. A real change is evident in their lives. They want to build a chapel in their village and have taken on the full support of a preacher stationed there. Pray for this and the other villages which are taking new strides toward self-support.

Thailand

Pray for the scattered Christians in Prachinburi Province. Pray especially for Mr. Aroon who was saved through reading the Gospel of John and who is a good witness and is leading others to Christ. Pray that God will give the Thailand Mission guidance as to whether it should again send missionaries into this province or release it to another mission. The great need in this field is for missionaries.



Colombia

The Cali church which has been doing so well is now experiencing an attack of the enemy. Pray that all concerned may know the victory over the enemy that the Lord Jesus has already won, and that the work will progress. . . . Continue to pray for the Christians who are undergoing persecution.

Ecuador

The Daily Vacation Bible School and Short Term Bible School programs are well under way in the coastal area. Pray that children may be reached for Christ within the next three or four months and that many adults will be strengthened in their faith through the study of the Word. . . . Pray for Caspichu, a witch doctor in the Dos Ríos section, and for his wife. They are convinced of their need for salvation but have not yet yielded to God.

Peru

Prayer is requested for the men and women students in the Huánuco Bible school. The missionaries long to see the Holy Spirit do a deep work in all hearts.

Chile

Prayer is requested for the following sick ones: *Fernando Poseck*—treasurer of the Institute Church in Temuco and Christian industrialist who recently underwent a serious kidney operation. . . . *Antonio Sepolitaquis*—Alliance colporteur from Concepción whose broken hip has caused much trouble and complications. . . . *Pedro Calliñir*—Alliance pastor from Capitan Pastene who is seriously ill.

Hong Kong

The Cheung Chau Bible Institute is located on an island ten miles from the city of Hong Kong. Of the fourteen who graduated last year, two are planning on going to Formosa, two to Indonesia, one to Thailand and one to North Borneo, while the rest will remain in the Hong Kong area and work temporarily in evangelistic bands. Pray that the Lord will open the doors before them. . . . Pray also that the Lord will send to the Bible institute other young people called of God to help meet the challenge of Southeast Asia, and that these new students will learn the necessary spiritual discipline as well as the lessons in the classrooms.

Philippines

The annual missionary conference will convene March 3-14. Pray that each missionary may experience personal spiritual refreshing and that wisdom, foresight and faith may be granted for all decisions affecting the work for the coming year. . . . The construction work on the new Ebenezer Bible Institute project is entering its final stages. Pray that the best of conscientious and skillful workmanship may be done on each building, and that wisdom will be given in securing the needed equipment. . . . Pray also that God will lay His hand upon young men and women who are willing to give themselves unreservedly, humbly and courageously to lifetime service for the Lord.

Indonesia

Rev. J. Arthur Mouw, former missionary to Kalimantan, is returning to the field for a period of special ministry. Meetings throughout West Borneo will begin about February 15. There is a great need for revival in the church of this area. Pray that the Lord may use Mr. Mouw in bringing about that revival. . . . Rev. and Mrs. M. K. Taylor have been appointed as missionaries to Indonesia but to date they have not been granted visas. Workers are desperately needed in all areas of Indonesia. Pray that the Taylors' visas will be granted *soon.*

Praise God for the initial response to the Indonesian *Light of Life* correspondence course based on the Gospel of John. There are obviously great possibilities in connection with this course except for the fact that there is lack of personnel and funds. In praying for this particular ministry, remember also: (1) the difficulty of communications in a land of islands; mail is sometimes lost and much time is consumed in transit; (2) the possibility of a greater ministry among Moslem young people, many of whom are "freethinkers"; (3) the need for wisdom in preparing additional reprints; (4) the preparation of the course based on the Book of Acts, which puts forth the Christian's responsibilities and privileges in Christ.

New Guinea

On January 7 a new station was opened in the mid-Baliem Valley. The first contacts were friendly. Pray that nothing will change this attitude. . . . Mrs. Gordon F. Larson has an urgent physical need. Pray that she will soon regain her health.

CLIFFORD E. HARROD, Reporter

News reports may be sent direct to Rev. C. E. Harrod, The Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, East and Lane Streets, Raleigh, N. C.

To the Fields

Rev. and Mrs. James Sunda and daughter, Margaret, sailed from New York January 26 for New Guinea where they will be stationed in the Baliem Valley. Both are graduates of Toccoa Falls Bible Institute, where Mr. Sunda received his bachelor's degree in Arts and Biblical Education. For the past three years they have served in the churches at Hazlehurst and Marietta, Ga. Their home church is in Lillian, Ala.

On Furlough

On January 4 *Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Carlson* arrived in Miami from Quito, Ecuador, where they were in charge of the school for missionaries' children. They have returned on early furlough because of Mr. Carlson's health. They are making their home in Wheaton, Ill.

Marriages

Miss Carolyn Correll Chrisman, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Robert M. Chrisman, and *Mr. Kenneth E. Van Kurin* were united in marriage on December 25, 1956, by the father of the bride who performed the ceremony in the Redlands, Calif., Christian and Missionary Alliance church. The young couple are continuing their work at Nyack Missionary College.

The New Generation

To *Rev. and Mrs. Judson S. Shoemaker,* Anderson, Ind., a son, Nathan Mark, on December 20, 1956.

Pittsburgh Church Holds 63rd Missionary Convention

Carnegie Hall will be the scene of the sixty-third annual Bible and missionary convention of Pittsburgh's (Pa.) North Side Christian and Missionary Alliance Church scheduled for March 10 to 17. The program will be under the direction of the pastor, Dr. Kenneth C. Fraser. Last year the North Side Church gave over $1,000 per week to foreign missions and every effort will be made to increase that amount this year.

The speakers include Rev. Harvey Bostrom, Ecuador; Rev. Harry Taylor, Cambodia; Dr. R. R. Brown, Omaha, Nebr.; Rev. L. J. Isch, Sr., of Johnson City, N. Y., and Rev. William Foley, of Tucson, Ariz. Mr. J. Stratton Shufelt, of Wheaton, Ill., and "The Northlanders of Sweden" will furnish the music. Those interested may secure further information by writing to the assistant pastor, Rev. Ralph Godwin, 709 Union Ave., Pittsburgh 12, Pa.

Albuquerque Church Reports Progress

The Heights Neighborhood Church of Albuquerque, N. M., recently experienced a stirring revival during services held by Rev. Clifford H. Erickson, of Glendale, Calif. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Rable assisted as soloist and organist, respectively.

The pastor, Rev. James J. Powell, writes that much progress has been made by this group since its beginning six years ago. The building has been completed and a new social hall and seven new Sunday school classrooms have been added. Several persons have accepted Christ as Saviour recently and others have testified to divine healing.

Key City Project Begun in Greater Boston

Chosen as the first Key City Project in New England for home extension work, Needham, Mass., has recently been entered with hopes of establishing an Alliance church. One of the localities on the circumferential highway around Boston, Needham is a predominantly Protestant community of more than 20,000 population.

The Alliance Church of Greater Boston, led by its pastor, Rev. George B. Decker, sponsored and conducted the initial public services as a missionary convention in the Village Club, October 19 to 21, 1956. Rev. William Hayes, pastor under appointment to this project, was present and was able to make valuable contacts with interested families. After much prayer, the Lord has made a suitable parsonage available and the American Legion Hall has been secured for services. Mr. Hayes desires to receive names and addresses of relatives or friends of Alliance folk now residing in the area. He may be addressed at 19 Mayo Ave., Needham 92, Mass. The prayers of The Alliance Family are solicited in behalf of this work.

Servicemen's Center Relocates in Portsmouth, Va.

The Christian Servicemen's Center of Portsmouth, Va., recently moved to a new location near the naval shipyard and was officially opened and dedicated on the last Sunday in December. Strategically located at 720 Court St., the new center has a very inviting red brick front with four large brick pillars. On the first floor are a beautiful lounge, a spacious recreation room and snack room. The second floor provides a large chapel, prayer rooms and a counseling room.

Several Portsmouth churches support and sponsor the center, which is operated under the direction of an executive committee of pastors and laymen. Rev. Andrew Berkner, pastor of the Alliance Tabernacle, is the chairman. He states that contacts with young men of Alliance families would be appreciated and that he and his coworkers will also contact servicemen of the area as names are sent to them at the center.

The Netherlands Alliance Fellowship

Rev. William Konemann, representative for The Christian and Missionary Alliance in the Netherlands, reports that God's blessing attended their fellowship during the past year. About one hundred persons attended the week-end missionary conference at Amerongen where Rev. Harry W. Post, returning from service in Kalimantan, Indonesia, brought messages.

On May 10, at the annual missionary meeting in Rotterdam, interested friends from many churches in both Holland and Belgium were present. On this occasion Dr. and Mrs. S. Smit were dedicated to the Lord's work in the Baliem Valley, to which they went in December (ALLIANCE WEEKLY December 26, 1956). The Alliance friends in Holland supplied the necessary funds for their passage to New Guinea. They, with Miss Elze Stringer, represent the Dutch fellowship in New Guinea. Several prayer groups throughout the Netherlands faithfully remember these missionaries in prayer and attempt to get others interested.

De Pionier ("The Pioneer") now has a monthly circulation of 4,000, and has been a means of stimulating interest and prayer support for Alliance missions, as well as bringing spiritual help to its readers by means of the articles translated from THE ALLIANCE WEEKLY.

Prayer Manuals Available

Copies of the 1957 Prayer Manual outlining the systematic prayer schedule for Alliance work both at home and on the foreign fields, may be secured from Christian Publications, Inc., Third and Reily Sts., Harrisburg, Pa.

Rev. and Mrs. James Sunda and child, New Guinea

Sunday

READING—Exodus 15:22-27.
TEXT—*"I am the Lord that healeth thee"* (verse 26).

It is very reasonable that God should expect us to trust Him for our bodies as well as our souls; for if our faith is not practical enough to bring us temporal relief, how can we be educated for real dependence upon God for anything that involves serious risk? It is all very well to talk about trusting God for the distant and future prospect of salvation after death! It is only when we come face to face with positive issues and overwhelming forces that we can prove the reality of divine power in a supernatural life. Hence, as an education to our very spirits as well as a glorious provision for our temporal life, God has trained His people to recognize Him as the supply of all their needs and to look to Him as the Physician of their bodies. Beloved, have you learned the meaning of *Jehovah-rophi*? Has it changed your Marah of trial into an Elim of blessing and praise?—A. B. SIMPSON.

Pray for The Island World; Eastern, South Pacific Districts, the Mexican Work.

Monday

READING—2 Peter 3:10-18.
TEXT—*"Grow in grace"* (verse 18).

Our faith cannot grow on the experiences of the past. Faith is retarded the moment that we cease appropriating fresh strength for present tasks. The daily manna which came to the Israelites in the wilderness is a type of the supply of grace which God has for our daily needs. As the Israelites gathered the manna each day, so we must appropriate daily a sufficient supply of grace for the tasks of the day. Our growth in grace is also conditioned upon the enlargement of the things which we undertake for God. When we enlarge the borders of our undertakings for God, He honors our faith with an added supply of grace. So it is possible within the realm of grace to move from enlargement to enlargement, from victory to victory, and from glory to glory, with a faith which "groweth exceedingly."—THE HERALD.

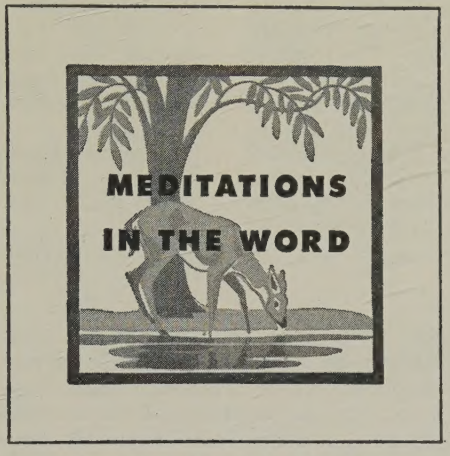
Pray for India; Western Pennsylvania District.

Tuesday

READING—Romans 1:8-17.
TEXT—*"I am debtor . . . I am ready"* (verses 14, 15).

The Lord did not tell the angels to preach the gospel, but He commanded the disciples to do this. So it is the sacred responsibility of His followers to see that this last command is carried out. If the church fails to give the gospel she fails in everything. If the church does not preach the gospel the world will remain lost, as if the Saviour had never died. Paul says, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." When we do something for missions we feel that we are doing a favor to others. But how different was Paul's conception. If a beggar comes asking for something, whatever is given he will accept and be satisfied. But if we are in debt we cannot act in the same manner. The creditor has a right to demand the whole payment.—ANDREW GIH *(Chinese pastor).*

Pray for Africa; Western, Western Canadian, Southeastern Districts.



Compiled by EDITH M. BEYERLE

Wednesday

READING—2 Corinthians 2:9-17.
TEXT—*"Triumph in Christ"* (verse 14).

I have no cares, O blessed Will,
For all my cares are thine;
I live in triumph, Lord! for Thou
Hast made Thy triumphs mine.

He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;
God's will is sweetest to him when
It triumphs at his cost.

Ill that God blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will!
—FREDERICK W. FABER.

Pray for Indo-China, Thailand; Northeastern, Eastern and Central Canadian Districts.

Thursday

READING—1 John 2:15-25.
TEXT—*"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world"* (verse 15).

We are living under a materializing influence that is disastrous to a more serious and devotional view of life. In the minds of many good people the ideal of human existence is material comfort and pleasure that can be purchased in the form of desirable surroundings. These ideals rise in the scale of magnitude and grandeur every year, and men say, "When I can realize this ideal of earthly paradise, I am going to devote more time to devotional preparation for the next world." The trouble is that they no sooner get their house on the seashore than they want a house in the mountains, and when they have that they want a house somewhere else. . . . Meanwhile they have become so immersed in this world and the pursuit of its pleasure and comfort that they have no time to read the Bible as they ought.—FRANCIS L. PATTON.

Pray for South America; Southwestern, Pacific Northwest Districts.

Friday

READING—Psalm 1.
TEXT—*"He . . . bringeth forth his fruit in his season"* (verse 3).

As healthy trees bring forth fruit in their appointed season, so God ordains for His children: youth to bear springtime fruit; middle-age, fruit of the summertime; old age, the fruit of the less-favored seasons. But there is a price to pay: a delight and constant meditation in the Law of God. No fruit tree can be productive without the refreshing draught from the clear stream of water. Neither can the Christian bear fruit at any stage of life without constant contact with the source of all fruitfulness—the clear, living stream of eternal truth as contained in the Bible. Some misguided or careless believers labor under the spiritual hallucination that they can drink of worldly cisterns all week and the Bible on Sunday at a church service and still thrive and be fruitful. But it cannot be done that way! Cisterns bring forth fruit of the world; living waters, spiritual life. All too many realize this fact when it is eternally too late to make the necessary choice.—PAMEH.

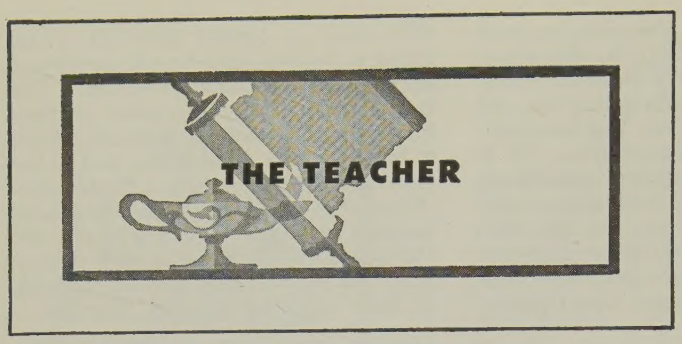
Pray for China, Hong Kong; Northwestern, New England Districts.

Saturday

READING—1 Corinthians 13.
TEXT—*"Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up"* (verse 4).

Love is not boastful, but unostentatious; it "vaunteth not itself." This means, as Dr. Moffatt translates it, that "love makes no parade." It does not show off any supposed superiority of its own. Ostentation desires to gain the applause of others and warrant their admiration, but this love never does. We speak of "empty boasting." There is no other kind of boasting. The very nature and essence of a boast is emptiness. Boasting is always an advertisement of poverty. We have only to think of the things of which the world boasts to know that no man has anything to boast of. There is no brag, no swank, no swagger about love. It is too big for that. Boasting is a vulgarity, and love is never vulgar.—LIFE OF FAITH.

Pray for Israel, Jordan, Syria; Central, South Atlantic Districts; Jewish Work.



By DON J. KENYON

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON—FEBRUARY 24, 1957

The Signs of the Times

Matthew 16:1-12

DEVOTIONAL READING—Romans 2:6-16

GOLDEN TEXT—*"Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"*—MATTHEW 16:3.

BACKGROUND AND LESSON ORIENTATION

In the days of His flesh our Lord was plagued by the religious leaders of Judah because He refused to step into the circle of their narrow concept of perverted truth. Christ did not meet with their prejudiced view of the Messiah. His concept of the kingdom was not theirs. The conflict which arose because of these opposing views found the Pharisees (united with their enemies the Sadducees against Christ) adamant in their "orthodoxy." Christ was just as adamant in His point of view, knowing that it was grounded in the will of God which He was sent to perform. The issue of a "sign" was based upon tradition that the Messiah would attest to His identity with miracles and wonders. In other words, these enemies were asking for specific proof in the midst of ample proof.

CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Christ had been performing some of His most notable miracles, which had stirred the populace (Matt. 15:30, 31). His reputation was spreading rapidly. Great crowds milled around Him and their poverty, ignorance and aimless religion moved Him to compassion. Food had been forgotten in their hunger for the supernatural manifestations He displayed. In the emergency Christ demonstrated His power to multiply (or create) the available loaves and fishes. Such acts in themselves should have been enough to prove conclusively His deity. The effrontery of the request (v. 1) to perform a sign was in the utter unreasonableness of it. Signs enough to convince anyone had already been heaped up. They wanted a specific sign which would have reduced Christ to the level of a magician.

SIMPLIFIED OUTLINE

1. *A Request and Response*—Matthew 16:1-5.
2. *A Lesson in Application*—Matthew 16:6-10.
3. *The Lesson Interpreted*—Matthew 16:11, 12.

KEY WORD ANALYSIS

"A sign from heaven"—*semeion ek tou ouranou* (v. 1). This expression suggests that the enemies of Jesus wanted a sign "out of heaven." From the language it is possible that they wanted some spectacular sign in the sky showing His power over nature. Usually when the dwelling place of God is meant the word "heaven" is plural. They were probably actually asking Christ to put Himself on the level of a magician or sorcerer. It was a physical sign of power that interested them, not a spiritual indication of divine authority. Elijah pulled down fire from heaven as an answer to prayer when confronted by the prophets of Baal. Thus carnality demands proof. Jesus had given conclusive proof.

COMMENTARY ON THE PRINTED TEXT

1. *A Request and Response* (Matt. 16:1-5).

The Pharisees (the legal conformists of the day) and the Sadducees (the deniers of the supernatural in religion) united to trap Jesus in some act or word that would condemn Him. Such a trap as a "sign from heaven" was ingenious indeed. If He refused He branded Himself as no Messiah, according to their tradition of Messiahship. If He complied He would have bowed to their authority by submitting to the suggestion. Thus Jesus found it necessary to do both.

He refused to perform a carnally-conceived sign. He accused them of dealing in meteorological prognostications which were largely guesswork. He reminded them that signs of His identity and authority had been far more apparent and they had completely missed them. He told them that their very desire for a sign was indicative of infidelity to God. Ultimately in the midst of His denunciation He did offer a sign—the supernatural deliverance of Jonah from Sheol, which was symbolic of His own death and resurrection.

2. *A Lesson in Application* (Matt. 16:6-10).

After the interview Jesus found it wise to warn His disciples of the corrosive effects of apostate religion. In so doing He used the figure of leaven. The disciples missed the point entirely and reasoned that Jesus was talking about food.

Jesus was disturbed because such reasoning indicated a weak perception of His spiritual lesson as well as a faithlessness toward the great miracle of feeding the five thousand. His rebuke touched the fact that their memories were so short when they had been so intimately involved in the supernatural ingathering of the remaining fragments.

It is amazing to note the patience of Jesus amidst dull perceptions and sluggish spiritual understanding. But at times His patience gave way to the more effective factor of open rebuke. In some respects the disciples showed themselves only slightly more alert than the Pharisees and Sadducees.

3. *The Lesson Interpreted* (Matt. 16:11, 12).

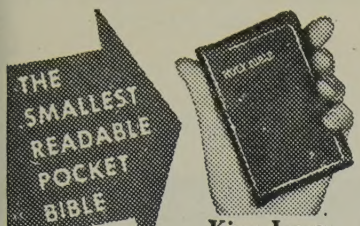
Christ then found it necessary to be specific in His interpretation of His original remark to His disciples. These were the men He was training for His kingdom purposes. He turned the trend of the conversation away from bread after the rebuke had sufficed to show this was not His intent.

It will help the reader to understand the disciples' point of view much better to bear in mind that leaven in bread was forbidden at times. Thus they took His statement to mean that if and when they purchased bread they should not buy it if it were in any way related to His enemies. He then interpreted to them His true meaning.

This matter of desiring proof for things was blasting to the principle of faith to which He had called them. Faith does not demand proof (Rom. 10:6, 7). Such leaven would soon destroy the very principle by which they were to be totally related to Him.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR LESSON PREPARATION

This lesson is built upon one continuous thought, which is rare in this quarter. Establish the context, especially that Christ had just fed the five thousand. Move to the spirit and demand of Christ's enemies. From this point it is largely addressed to His disciples and the necessity of their abiding faith in Him. Nothing blasts faith like the demand for *proof*.



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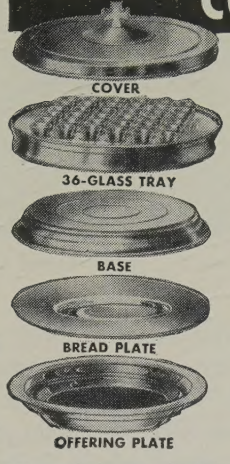

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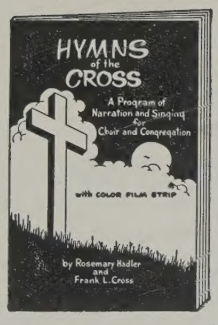
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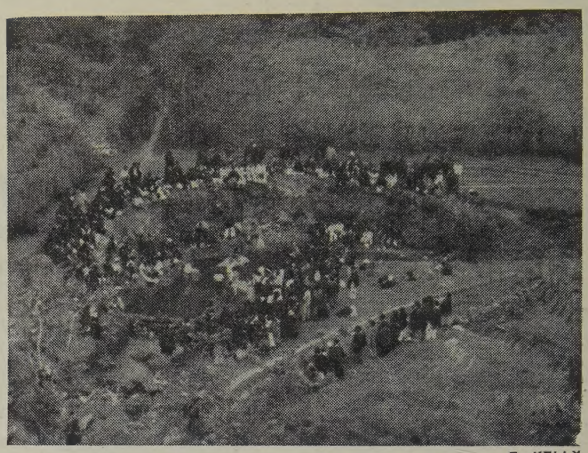

E. KELLY

A baptismal service in Colombia

THE mayor of Montañita, Colombia, addressed the little group that had been herded into his presence after being marched two hours over the mountain trails from their farms. He sternly said, "For having those religious services in your homes and frightening the neighbors with your loud singing you are being made prisoners." Then turning to the crowd which had gathered the mayor continued, "This Protestant group is the beginning of rabble violence. They are a party of worthless good-for-nothings."

Early that morning when armed policemen had entered the home of Cenon Garcia, the evangelical lay-preacher, one of them lifted a Bible from the table saying, "So you are the Protestant heretics that don't believe in the Virgin." For reply Don Cenon turned to the first chapter of Luke and read the statements concerning Mary. But the police said they had orders to arrest the Protestants and proceeded to round up the entire family.

Don Cenon's children, two sons and two daughters, and his parents all had to go. His wife was later released. No time was given them to eat breakfast. All religious books in the house, mostly Bibles and hymnals, were taken along as evidence. Another family was surprised while they were kneeling in family worship. They were made to join in the march to Montañita. As they walked along the prisoners began to sing hymns of praise to God but the police ordered them to be silent.

From Saturday until Tuesday both men and women remained prisoners, but Tuesday night the men were taken to Florencia by truck. After being given rough treatment and held for a week they were released, but not until they signed a statement. The mayor has warned all Christians in Montañita that worse things will happen to them if they continue to have services. He threatens even rougher treatment and says he will send them to the penal colony in the jungle.

This was not hundreds of years ago; it took place July 7, 1956.

When quiet farming people of the Andean slopes are willing to suffer loss of liberty and risk their lives for the sake of Christ can we count our support of missionary work "a sacrifice"?

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